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Transforming for our transfers: the creation of a transfer student services librarian

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Transforming for our transfers: the creation of a transfer student services librarian

Transfer
student
services
librarian

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to describe the unique library, research and information literacy skills that transfer students need, specifically at the University of North Carolina Wilmington, which led to the creation, recruitment and appointment of a Transfer Student Services Librarian at William Madison Randall Library (Randall Library).

Design/methodology/approach – Along with a brief review of the relevant literature, this paper describes the specific needs that were identified that led to the creation of the position; the unique gaps in information skills that transfer students have; how the university was addressing the needs of transfer students; how the library became focused on the needs of this population of students; how the library began collaborating with campus partners to address these needs; and, to date, how the position has impacted transfer students.

Findings – An increase in the number of transfer students from community colleges, four year institutions and military service combined with the institution's information literacy curriculum requirements, led to the creation of a new position called "Transfer Student Services Librarian".

Practical implications – Academic libraries wishing to explore the creation of such a position, or wanting to assess their own institution's needs for their transfer student population, will benefit from this paper.

Originality/value – Few, if any, libraries have adopted a position specifically for transfer student services and this paper addresses how to assess the need and decide on practical applications for other academic libraries.

Keywords Academic libraries, Library services, Information literacy, Transfer students, Military students, Students in transition

Paper type Case study

Introduction

While there is a plethora of research and practical guidance within the higher education literature about transfer students, and organizations such as the [National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students \(2017\)](#), the [University of South Carolina's \(2016\)](#) National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition and the [Association of American Colleges and Universities \(2017\)](#) have long provided resources to help academics ensure the success of transfer students, the research and literature specifically related to academic libraries and transfer students is scarce ([Phillips and Atwood, 2010](#)). However, the necessity for academic libraries to both identify the specific needs of transfer students and to address those needs is clear ([Phillips and Atwood, 2010](#)).

Shapiro, Dundar, Wakhungu, Yuan and Harrell, in their National Student Clearinghouse Research report (2015), noted that in Fall 2014, based on 3,934 institutions, the number of students who were enrolled in institutions of higher education as "transfer-in students" was 1,472,460. These authors also reported that:



[...] of the 3.6 million students who entered college for the first time in fall 2008, over one third (37.2 percent) transferred to a different institution at least once within six years. Of these, almost half changed their institution more than once (45 percent). Counting multiple moves, the students made 2.4 million transitions from one institution to another from 2008 to 2014 (Shapiro *et al.*, 2015, p. 3).

Transferring from one institution to another has essentially become the new normal (Marling, 2013). However, while more and more common, transferring from one institution to another presents a number of challenges for students. Transfer students face specific challenges including those related to “getting ready”, “getting in” and “getting through” as summarized by Handel (2013). Transfer students often struggle with a lack of information about the process of transferring, how their completed coursework will be counted and difficulties in adjusting to a new culture, policies and resources. Additionally, transfer students differ from traditional, “native” students in terms of motivational levels, ages, preparation level and more (Appalachian State University, 2016).

Literature review

So what, if anything, can academic libraries do to help transfer students succeed? Two of the first authors to initiate this discussion were Still (1990) and later Staines (1996). In her article titled “Library Services for Transfer Students”, Still (1990) notes that transfer students have unique challenges and that academic libraries can assist in overcoming these obstacles. She writes that transfer students “are likely to feel alienated and – equally (or more) important – their grades are likely to suffer as a result of ‘transfer shock’” (Still, 1990, p. 51). The concept of “transfer shock” was introduced into the literature as early as 1965 and refers to transfer students’ tendency to encounter a “severe drop in performance upon transfer” (Hill, 1965, p. 202). Still (1990, p. 52) also notes that transfer students, specifically those from community colleges and smaller colleges or universities, may feel “overwhelmed by the sheer size of the library in the larger institution”. She suggests that by simply providing information to transfer students, academic libraries can help these students become more comfortable with curricular requirements and potentially educate them on how to address specific problems they might encounter in their first semester such as locating relevant campus information (Still, 1990).

Staines was one of the first librarians to gather quantitative data about academic libraries and transfer students in her article “Moving Beyond Institutional Boundaries: Perceptions Toward BI Among Transfer Students”, studying the differences in perceptions of library faculty and staff in information literacy instruction (then referred to as “bibliographic instruction” or “BI”) at community colleges compared to four-year institutions (1996). Staines (1996) uncovered an “instructional gap” between academic libraries at community colleges and four-year institutions and highlighted the specific differences in both the purpose and the number of opportunities for information literacy instruction between the two. Her findings showed that native students, those beginning their academic career at a four-year institution, have more timely and appropriate library instruction, whereas those transferring in are not likely to have the same opportunities (Staines, 1996). It is often assumed that because students transferring from community colleges have already earned college credit that they already have the necessary research and library skills needed to succeed at their new institution (Still, 1990).

Much later, in “A Library Instruction Survey for Transfer Students: Implications for Library Services”, Tag reported on the results of a survey intended to measure the information needs and skills of transfer students entering Western Washington University (2004). Tag noted that many academic libraries have established information literacy

programming targeted to incoming, first semester, native students. However, she found that transfer students often have to “fend for themselves” with regard to any disparities in information literacy skills (Tag, 2004, p. 102).

In “Transferring Skills, Transferring Students: A Call To Academic Libraries”, Phillips and Atwood eloquently summarize the contributions of Still, Staines and Tag, as well as Cox and Johnson (1992) among others. For a more comprehensive summary of the literature related to transfer students and academic libraries, readers should review the publication by Phillips and Atwood (2010). Phillips and Atwood (2010) surveyed academic libraries in Ohio, and the results indicate that most libraries that responded to the survey do not provide targeted, specific information literacy instruction for transfer students. Perhaps, even more importantly, they urge academic librarians to discuss the specific needs of transfer students and to develop programming and services to develop their information literacy skills which will ultimately promote transfer student success (Phillips and Atwood, 2010). Authors such as Kearns and Vidas (2013), Gregor *et al.* (2015), Mills *et al.* (2015) and Heinbach (2016) have responded to this call and have helped continue this much needed discussion.

Context

With the creation of the Transfer Student Services Librarian position at the University of North Carolina Wilmington (UNCW), librarians hope to add a perspective and voice to this important dialogue. UNCW is located in the Southeastern region of North Carolina and is one of 17 campuses within the University of North Carolina system. UNCW has a student population of just over 15,000, with 14,000 of those students being undergraduate students. The university offers 57 degrees in 49 majors. The library serving the campus is William Madison Randall Library (Randall Library) with a staff of 51, 25 serving as librarians.

According to Jessica Horne, Assistant Director of Transfer and Non-Traditional Admission, by 2006 faculty and staff at UNCW had become increasingly aware of how many students were transferring to the university and that these students made important contributions to the academic community, as well as the larger local and regional community, and therefore began more actively recruiting transfer students to campus (personal communication, 2016). This resulted in the formation of the Transfer Admissions Team within the university’s Office of Admissions, which has developed over the past decade into a team that currently consists of seven members (J. Horne, personal communication, 2016). Between 2009 and 2013, there was a 38 per cent increase in transfer applicants from 1,224 in 2009 to 1,689 in 2013 (J. Adams, personal communication, 2016). In the past year, the number of transfer students that enrolled in UNCW went from 1,420 in Fall 2015 to 1,595 in Fall 2016 (J. Horne, personal communication, 2016). As the campus began to focus more on transfer students so did library faculty at Randall Library. In the past five years, library faculty became aware of the increase in transfer students on campus, as well as their unique backgrounds, and this was a strong impetus to think about how best to serve these students’ library, research and information literacy needs.

Of particular importance to the library was the consideration that the profile of UNCW’s transfer students is more diverse than the overall student body. While 47 per cent of transfers were men, for instance, only 38 per cent of incoming first year students were men in the Fall 2016. Likewise, more of the transfer students are from ethnically diverse backgrounds (20 per cent) as compared to incoming first year students (17.3 per cent). Transfer students are also required to declare a major at the time of admission to UNCW, whereas incoming first year students are not able to declare a major until their sophomore year. The most common majors for transfer students are biology, business, communication studies, education, film studies, nursing and psychology. Considered collectively, this

information about transfer students helps the library faculty and staff better understand what these students may need and what library resources they may seek.

A considerable percentage of transfer students at UNCW are military or veterans (20 per cent). This was a factor to which UNCW instructors and librarians had been playing close attention. These students could range not only in age but also in background and educational status, theoretically placing them in classes with mostly traditional UNCW students that fit a more homogeneous demographic. These factors certainly present challenges to students, as well as instructors and librarians. When classes are diverse in terms of age, college experience and information literacy skill levels, designing appropriate instruction can be difficult, and, furthermore, student motivational levels to learn and/or practice these skills likely varies as well.

For the past decade, UNCW has attempted to address the specific needs of traditional, incoming first year students. However, University College (UC), the department where first year and undeclared transfer students are admitted, advised and supported with various services and programs, recognized that “despite a strong tradition of student service at UNCW, the degree of programming, student support, and advising dedicated for first year students was not always applicable for transfer students” (J. Adams, personal communication, 2016). The university “wanted to meet these specific students’ needs, such as academic preparedness; learning new requirements, policies, and procedures; the personal and social adjustments; growing financial responsibilities; academic and career planning; and/or transitioning to civilian life” from military service, and “there was also a need to make some academic policies and procedures more ‘friendly’ for these populations” (J. Adams, personal communication, 2016). UC began to address these needs in several ways which align with the guidance of researchers and practioners focused on transfer student success and the library faculty would soon follow. [Tipton and Bender \(2006, p. 401\)](#) have indicated that:

There are two good reasons why small-scale, intensive collaborations continue and ought to continue at the research university at the same time the large-scale efforts are pursued. One reason is special student populations such as our under-prepared transfer students. The one-size-fits-all school of education has already failed some of these students more than once, and alternatives are desirable for retention and graduation of a diverse student population. Students entering the research university environment for the first time are joining a scholarly community, and they need to understand that community’s rules and expectations in order to participate fully. Interaction with the instructors promotes this social learning. Secondly, it is difficult to mount anything meaningful online until it is tested with students first ([Dabbagh, 2003](#)). The informal experiments and collaborations in information literacy on every campus serve as laboratories to define the possible and the desirable on a greater scale.

With the “small-scale” idea in mind, UC created the Students in Transition Program (SiT) in 2009 which “provided a vehicle for collaborative campus initiatives focused on transfer, military, and exploratory student success” (J. Adams, personal communication, 2016). Furthermore, UC created “Transfer Seminar” (UNI 201) as an elective, two-credit course in Fall 2010 (J. Adams, personal communication, 2016). The goal of this course was and is to “support transfer students in transitioning to campus and optimizing their UNCW experience” while focusing on skills such as critical thinking and information literacy that are key to being successful in college and topics of interest to transfer students in particular such as campus resources, policies and procedures, career planning, financial literacy and graduation requirements ([University College of the University of North Carolina Wilmington, 2016](#)). To assess the success of the seminar, an end of semester survey was conducted, and, of those, who responded, 91.55 per cent of transfer students who took the

seminar in Fall 2013 reported that they “felt more confident building relationships with faculty and staff”, and this response rate increased to 100 per cent of respondents in spring of 2014 (J. Adams, personal communication, 2016).

When the vacant First Year Engagement (FYE) Librarian position was filled in the summer of 2011, part of the duties of this position was to coordinate and collaborate with the advisors in UC, the Office of Transition Programs and the Office of the Dean of Students to support the growing population of transfer students. However, at the time, the workload devoted specifically to first-year student services was consuming a large percentage of her time. This librarian, along with the Associate Director of Research and Instructional Services (RIS) and Library Assessment, was responsible for coordinating and delivering a host of services and instructional opportunities targeted to students enrolled in “First Year Seminar” (UNI 101). These librarians continued (based on work from previous years) to craft the curriculum for required face-to-face library instruction sessions for all sections of First Year Seminar, assess and update the in-class materials used for the sessions and improve the assessment tools used prior to, during and after the library sessions while updating various electronic resources such as the “Library Resources for First Year Students” webpage and the course textbook chapter devoted to library resources. The FYE Librarian also coordinated the scheduling of more than 100 library instruction sessions and trained the other instructional librarians to teach a portion of the sessions.

Also in 2011, UC hired an advisor that was responsible specifically for coordinating services for transfer students. The FYE Librarian and this advisor began more closely collaborating in 2012 when the Transfer Seminar went from a two-credit hour course to a three-credit course and as part of the expansion was slated to have more of a focus on information literacy and library skills. While this course was not mandatory, as the First Year Seminar had recently become, it was increasingly popular as the transfer student population at UNCW was growing and becoming more diverse.

In 2014, the Transfer Seminar was approved as both an Information Literacy-intensive competency course and a Writing-Intensive competency course, two categories of the university’s recently revised general education curriculum called “University Studies”. The designation of “information literacy intensive” was especially important for transfer students who needed to fulfill the requirements of University Studies, as most native students were able to fulfill this, in part, by taking First Year Seminar. This factor encouraged more transfer students to sign up for the seminar because they could gain a total of six competency credits toward their degree (3 h for each of the competency components).

The amount of collaboration time between the FYE Librarian and the UC advisor increased, as the transfer sections became more popular, consistently filled up, expanded in the number of sections of the course going from two sections of two credit courses in Fall 2010 to eight sections of three credit courses in Fall 2016 and became more focused on information literacy skill development. For example, the UC advisor requested assistance with a special “library assignment” that all students in the Transfer Seminar sections were being required to complete. This assignment was akin to a library “scavenger hunt” created by the UC advisor, and it relied heavily on electronic resources from library databases and print materials from the library collections that were not necessarily the best ones for the assignment objectives or consistently available library resources (i.e. databases to which there were no longer subscriptions or books that were only available to Education majors in the Educational Lab in the College of Education). Therefore, it required not only the involvement of the FYE Librarian to edit and revise the assignment each semester but also the time of other reference librarians who staffed the Research Help Desk, as the transfer students would often request assistance as the assignment’s due date drew near. So while

the spirit of the assignment was valued by the FYE Librarian, the time needed to make necessary tweaks to the assignment was becoming more and more difficult to find given other responsibilities.

Since the creation of the Transfer Seminar course, it has, like the First Year Seminar course, included a required face-to-face library instruction section. The FYE Librarian taught each of these sections, as she was the best qualified to teach these sessions having been in direct collaboration with the UC advisor and having coordinated with the transfer student services departments across campus. However, moving forward, the UC advisor wanted to add a second, follow-up library instruction session for all the Transfer Seminar sections. While there were only a handful of these sections each fall semester, they increased every fall and this required the FYE Librarian to be available for twice the number of library instruction sessions. This new focus on Transfer Seminar, along with the other duties of being a research and instruction librarian, added up to more than a full-time workload for the FYE Librarian. It was this unwieldy workload that in part spurred the need to create a new librarian position to address the library and information literacy needs of the UNCW transfer student body.

Another consideration for creating a new librarian position specifically geared toward meeting the needs of transfer students was the discovery that transfer students do not enter UNCW with the same foundational coursework that focuses on information literacy that native UNCW students are required to complete. When the University Studies curriculum was created, it was structured with native, incoming first year students in mind. University Studies requires that students complete First Year Seminar (which satisfies three credit hours of competency credit for the information literacy component) and six additional hours of information literacy intensive courses with three of those hours coming in a student's major. As English Composition (at the 200 level) satisfies both a requirement for the Composition component of University Studies and three competency hours of information literacy credit, most native UNCW students take this course. So, between First Year Seminar and the 200-level English Composition course, students are two-thirds of the way toward completing their information literacy competency requirement. A transfer student, on the other hand, is required to enter into UNCW with his or her English Composition requirements already fulfilled ([Admissions of the University of North Carolina Wilmington, 2017](#)), and, as students must have a minimum of 24 h of college credits already completed by the time they start classes at UNCW, they do not need or want to take First Year Seminar.

Taking all of this into consideration, it became clear to librarians and others that after the implementation of the University Studies curriculum, there was a notable problem for transfer students with regard to information literacy skills and competency credit. To address the issue of transfer students not taking First Year Seminar and therefore not gaining the three competency credit hours for information literacy associated with that course, university administration asked librarians to create an information literacy exam that if passed, would provide transfer students with those three initial credits that native students gain from First Year Seminar. Although the test itself (now known as the "Information Literacy Competency Exam for Transfer Students") was finalized within two years of this request, prior to creating the Transfer Student Services Librarian position, both the exam administration and exam scoring was a continuous workload that needed to be absorbed by someone. This was yet another factor that contributed to the need for a new position.

Additionally, through the creation and pilot administration of the Information Literacy Competency Exam for Transfer Students, librarians discovered that generally speaking, transfer students who come from the local community college have weaker information

literacy skills as compared to native UNCW students. While this finding cannot be generalized to all transfer students from all institutions to all colleges and universities, the simple fact that information literacy is a learning goal for UNCW and is reflected in nine competency credit hours that students must complete to graduate, transfer students who will not have had the same coursework focused on information literacy will be at a disadvantage. Additionally, many students who transfer to UNCW are coming from community colleges where libraries have different, if not fewer, library resources so naturally library and information literacy skills would not yet have been developed for the new institution's resources.

Finally, the library instruction program at UNCW is robust and is embedded throughout the coursework in a student's first two years (and beyond) at UNCW. Because transfer students do not have that initial exposure to those information literacy concepts or to the librarians who teach the skills alongside of course instructors, transfer students are not likely to have the same level of skills or knowledge as native students. And when students are provided with information literacy instruction within the student's major at the sophomore or junior level, they may not have the fundamental skills to be able to acquire the higher level skills being taught. Addressing this deficit in information literacy skills would be a difficult issue to tackle, and, without focused attention on this issue, it would likely be hard to rectify.

The aforementioned concerns and issues, when considered collectively, prompted a serious discussion about the need to create a new librarian position to serve transfer students. The opportunity to create this position came when the Randall Library eLearning Librarian was the successful candidate to fill the position of Health and Human Services Librarian in mid-2014. As responsibilities related to eLearning were becoming more and more distributed across librarian portfolios, and with the position of Distance Learning Librarian leading more efforts to create online library tutorials, it was determined that the eLearning Librarian position could be changed to the Transfer Student Services Librarian. The Associate Director of RIS and Library Assessment drafted the position description. In writing this draft, research was done to identify other similar positions at other institutions and there were none at the time. While libraries were addressing the needs of transfer students through FYE or Personal Librarian positions, there were no positions identified that had a sole emphasis on transfer students. After a quick, recent review of library websites and after querying a few library listservs, it seems as though this might still be the case.

The position description was modeled after the description of the FYE Librarian. The logic was that Randall Library wanted to have the same dedication and level of service to transfer students as was being provided to first year, native students. Targeted information literacy instruction and personalized communication were to be the focus and teaching one of the library's credit courses ("Introduction to Library Research and Technology" or LIB 103) which would later be approved to be designated as an information literacy intensive course. Collection development and management was less of an emphasis but that and other aspects of serving as a research and instructional librarian were to be included. Once the full position description was created, it was shared with members of the RIS division, the University Librarian and members of the library's Senior Leadership Team (SLT). All position lines, when vacated, are considered to be "up for grabs" for any unit in the library and SLT members can make a case for a position in their own area. However, the case for a Transfer Student Services Librarian was quite strong. Additionally, filling a vacant position in RIS was a priority given the workloads spread across this group of

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librarians. Once approval was given by key library faculty to move forward, a shorter advertisement for the opening was created ([Appendix 1](#)). The Transfer Student Services Librarian position was created in late summer/early Fall 2014 and advertised in the middle of the Fall 2014.

To begin the recruitment for this new position, a search committee was formed and was chaired by the library's University Studies Librarian. The FYE Librarian also served on the search committee. Additionally, the UC advisor focusing on transfer students was a member of the search committee. To round out the search committee, a library staff member and a librarian were additional members. The recruitment and application process was the same for any other RIS position. The position was advertised in national publications as well as various library listservs. Many applicants noted in their cover letter that they had never seen such a position and were eager and excited to pursue such a unique opportunity. Search committee members focused on finding applicants that met both the required and preferred qualifications, and, after a successful search, the position was offered and accepted and the successful candidate started in the summer of 2015.

Discussion

Any brand new position inherently comes with challenges and opportunities. The opportunity to have someone come into the position with a fresh perspective and new ideas was, and is, exciting. Having someone who could dedicate time and energy to transfer students in a way never before possible was, and is, impactful. Uncertainty about what specific, day-to-day duties should be undertaken is a typical challenge with any new position. Fortunately for Randall Library, the successful candidate had previous professional experience, was a transfer student herself, and is the sibling of someone in the military. She came in with a strong grasp of the transfer student population, as well as concrete ideas of how to jump in and make the position work for her, for the library, for the university, and most importantly, for the transfer students at UNCW.

At the point of publication of this article, the position has been filled for almost two years. Both the concept of the position itself and the librarian in the position have been well received by UC faculty and staff, transfer students and librarian colleagues. Prior to filling the position, the Associate Director of RIS and Library Assessment in collaboration with colleagues in the library's RIS division, articulated specific needs for the successful candidate to fulfill. Each need is briefly described below with notes about challenges encountered and potential future work. Anecdotally, it appears the needs that were identified when the position was created are being met. Formal assessment of these goals will be planned for and implemented in the near future.

Goal: collaborate with university college to provide targeted information literacy instruction to the transfer seminar (UNI 201)

The Transfer Student Services Librarian currently schedules and teaches all face-to-face library instruction sessions for the Transfer Seminar. Two sessions are taught for each section of the course. The initial session provides a combination of content modified from the instruction session delivered to First Year Seminar and the instruction session provided to the 100 level of English Composition. The second session is a follow-up session which allows for students to practice skills learned in the first session as well as ask questions if any clarification is needed. One of the challenges faced by the Transfer Student Services Librarian is balancing the requests of the Transfer Seminar instructors with what previous library assessment has shown. Assessment has indicated that transfer students do not have the same information literacy skills as native students; however, they have had some

previous experience with research at a community college or another institution. There is a delicate balance in acknowledging that transfer students have completed college coursework and have likely done research projects and papers while also emphasizing that Randall Library resources are different and that students may not have been asked to perform the same rigorous level of research or information evaluation that UNCW requires. This will likely always be a work in process and challenge for the Transfer Student Services Librarian. Providing quality instruction requires constant assessment and modification. The librarian in this position has excelled at communicating with UC instructors to make sure she is addressing their needs and at the same time engaging students in the classroom and beyond to make sure that they are learning what they need to learn. It should also be noted that the face-to-face sessions are held in Randall Library. This is in part to help combat the intimidation that many transfer students face when coming to an institution with a larger library as noted earlier in the literature review.

Goal: establish relationships with transfer students and UNCW faculty and staff who work directly with transfer students

To help alleviate both transfer shock and the alienation that transfer students often feel, the librarian in the position was tasked with establishing communication outlets with transfer students and finding ways to build relationships with them and with the faculty and staff on campus who work with them. It was also important to help address transfer students' general feelings of anxiety in locating university information. With assistance from the Registrar's Office, the librarian has been able to identify and gather the e-mail addresses of all incoming transfer students, and at the beginning of each semester she sends them a personalized e-mail based on their academic major. A welcoming message along with information about the student's liaison librarian is provided. The hope is that this helps transfer students feel welcomed and know that they have a reliable resource when they need information.

In addition to the relationship building work that the FYE Librarian had done previously, another librarian had developed a strong relationship with the university's military student population through work with the Veteran Education and Transition Support Student Veterans Organization as well as other campus offices and services working with military students. The Transfer Student Services Librarian has carried on these traditions and has expanded them. Additional campus events, organizations, and offices have also been identified and the librarian has been able to serve as a resource and a friendly face. For example, the librarian worked with other library colleagues to create a poster about library resources that is displayed in the new Military Resource Lounge on campus. Additionally, the librarian worked with the Health & Human Resources Librarian to create a presentation for the College of Health & Human Services' (CHHS) Student Success Center "#TRANSFERmation Tuesday," an event for incoming transfer students to learn about campus and CHHS resources (T. Ivins, personal communication, 2016). She has consistently been able to identify campus fairs and events that are likely to attract transfer students and is a strong presence at these. There is no shortage of initiative and ideas on her part to continue these efforts.

Goal: create a library website specifically for transfer students

Creating a website to describe library services and resources specifically for transfer students seemed redundant when the idea arose a couple of years ago. Any resources or services that a transfer student would need could be located using the library's main homepage. However, after better understanding the unique needs of transfer students, and a willingness to ensure that these students feel welcomed and encouraged, it was decided that

a website would be useful. So the “Library Resources for Transfer Students” website was created in the summer of 2016. It largely reflects the look and feel of the page for First Year Students, however, it has unique content and is geared toward transfer students. Further work will be done to this page, adding additional content geared toward transfer students. For example, tutorials that provide an overview between the differences between community college libraries and Randall Library could be created.

In addition to the initiatives listed above, the Transfer Student Services Librarian has also documented what she believes to be the key focus areas of the position now having had “boots on the ground” experience for the initial year and longer (T. Ivins, personal communication). She has also created a proposal for a new credit bearing course: “Lifelong Library & Information Research Skills” (LIB 203). This course would be an excellent information literacy course for transfer students. She was heavily involved in the modification and creation of a set of online tutorials that both the First Year Seminar and Transfer Seminar students need to complete prior to the fall semester’s information literacy instruction sessions. She has served as a proctor for the “Information Literacy Competency Exam for Transfer Students” and works with colleagues to score the exam. She has also recently taken on liaison librarian responsibilities for the university’s early college high school program. There are many parallels between these students and UNCW’s transfer students, and, in fact, for many of the program’s graduates, they will end up transferring to a different institution. Furthermore, the Transfer Student Services Librarian is helping to teach these students lifelong information literacy skills they will be able to use at any college or university they attend.

Conclusion

Perhaps one of the greatest impacts of creating this position is increasing the awareness of other library faculty and staff to the needs of transfer students, and educating faculty and staff outside of the library about the unique challenges transfer students face in terms of information literacy skills. But even with the great strides made at UNCW, there are still many issues to address. More targeted instruction to transfer students (some of which will likely be online) needs to occur, primarily for those who do not enroll in the Transfer Seminar. Additional discussions amongst the various local school systems about access to, instruction on, and use of state wide library consortium resources in area community colleges and other institutions, would be highly beneficial. And while the literature review at the beginning of this article suggests that the profession as a whole needs to do more research on this demographic in relation to how the library can assist with information literacy skills, it is clear that having this position will ultimately help the transfer students at UNCW become better researchers, become more comfortable with the library and its resources and ultimately help them succeed.

Libraries that are at institutions with increasing numbers of transfer students may want to consider creating a similar position or adding these responsibilities to a librarian’s portfolio. Librarians may want to reach out to campus offices (e.g. Registrar’s Office, Admissions, the Dean of Students, undergraduate advisors, etc.) to first identify their transfer student population’s needs. Determining the size of this population, trends in its growth, and how it differs from native students can help libraries assess the need for a specialized transfer student librarian position. With a focus on transfer students, librarians can help these students gain the same knowledge and skills as their native counterparts. The larger implication here is for libraries to assist all students, transfer or otherwise, succeed in their academic careers and beyond.

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Further reading

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Appendix 1. Advertisement for transfer student services position at UNCW

William Madison Randall Library

Transfer Student Services Librarian/Lecturer

Vacancy # 15F022

Position # 6571

The William Madison Randall Library at UNCW (UNCW) invites applications for the position of Transfer Student Services Librarian. UNCW is a member institution of the University of North Carolina, a multi-campus university comprised of all 17 of North Carolina's public institutions. UNCW is nationally recognized for its marine sciences teaching and research programs, and for its strengths in arts and sciences, business, education and health and human services. The University is situated on a beautiful arboretum campus located in an historic port city within five miles of the Atlantic Ocean and currently enrolls approximately 14,000 students.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: Serves as dedicated librarian to transfer students, a population which comprises approximately 38 per cent of UNCW's enrollment. This position will work strategically with other librarians and campus personnel to facilitate transfer student success by engaging with faculty and staff involved in the recruitment and teaching of transfer students and assisting transfer students in their library, information literacy and research needs. The Transfer Student Services Librarian is a creative, team-oriented librarian who combines information literacy instruction, research expertise and outreach with knowledge of the specific needs of transfer students. The Transfer Student Services Librarian will also serve as liaison to academic disciplines as assigned and will teach at least one section of LIB 103: Introduction to Library Research and Technology per academic year.

Liaison Librarian Responsibilities: Serves as liaison librarian to transfer students and to academic departments as assigned. Takes initiative to identify and meet user needs and expectations through ongoing communication and assessment. Collaborates with UNCW offices such as Admissions, the Transfer to Teal program, and the UNCW Transfer Student Organization to provide awareness and education about the use of the library and information resources. Works with the FYE Librarian and University Studies Librarian to ensure transfer students have adequate library support to meet the information literacy requirement of University Studies. Provides in-depth, specialized research consultation through e-mail, chat and face-to-face sessions. Collaborates with library and campus colleagues to design, deliver and assess information literacy instruction with a focus on student learning outcomes including the library's component of UNI 201: Transfer Seminar (<http://uncw.edu/uc/advising/UNI201.html>). Designs and creates online instruction including tutorials as needed; provides regular service hours on the Learning Commons Help Desk; Develops and manages collections to support research and instruction in academic area(s) by collaborating with the Coordinator of Collection Development to continuously revise policies and select relevant materials; Educates and informs campus constituents on issues of scholarly communication.

General Library Faculty Responsibilities: Contributes to planning, implementing and assessing services; participates in the development, implementation and review of Library policies, procedures and services; and produces creative and scholarly contributions to librarianship. Serves on Library and University committees, as requested. This position reports to the Associate Director Library Assessment and Instructional Services.

REQUIREMENTS: ALA-Accredited Master's degree in library and information science; experience providing research assistance in an academic library; demonstrated knowledge of issues pertaining to transfer student needs and experiences in higher education; demonstrated experience working with transfer students in an academic library experience providing information literacy instruction to groups; experience with electronic resources, information technologies and collection management; demonstrated knowledge of current and emerging trends in academic library services/resources and the ability to integrate appropriate technologies into the work setting; strong public service orientation; demonstrated ability to work effectively on teams; and excellent oral and written communication skills. **PREFERRED:** Demonstrated experience in teaching credit bearing courses; experience in creating online tutorials.

This is a renewable 11 month position with faculty status (lecturer, non-tenure track). Competitive salary and generous benefits package, including 22 days of vacation. To apply, please complete the online application process available on the Web at <http://consensus.uncw.edu>. A letter of interest, curriculum vitae and contact information for three professional references should be addressed to Chair – Transfer Student Services Search Committee and attached to the online application – not e-mailed or mailed. Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF attachments are required. For questions regarding the online application process, contact [Business Officer name and phone]. **Priority review of applications will begin November 5, 2014;** however, applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Position start date is negotiable. Under North Carolina law, applications and related materials are confidential personnel documents and not subject to public release. Criminal background checks will be conducted on finalists prior to offers of employment.

For information about UNCW see www.uncw.edu/index.html; for information about transfer students at UNCW see <http://uncw.edu/admissions/transfer.html> and <http://uncw.edu/admissions/TRReqs.html>; for information about Randall Library see <http://library.uncw.edu/>; and for information about The University of North Carolina see www.northcarolina.edu/.

UNC Wilmington actively fosters a diverse and inclusive working and learning environment and is an equal-opportunity employer. Qualified men and women from all racial, ethnic or other minority groups, protected veterans, and individuals with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply.

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